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### (No. 27) – Pet Ownership Survey Yields Surprising Results

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# REPORT TO HUMANITARIANS

Number 27 — March, 1974

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## HUMANE SOCIETY TRIES TO REFORM JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, PUBLIC POUND

by  
Stephen Byrd  
Member, Board of Directors  
Mississippi Animal Rescue League

### Editor's Note:

*Nobody knows how many dog pounds exist in the United States, or how many dogs and cats are destroyed in these pounds annually, sometimes in ways that are crude and cruel beyond belief. But there must be thousands. A tremendous variation is found in the buildings, equipment, personnel, operating methods and treatment of the animals handled.*

*The public pound described in the accompanying article falls somewhere between the extremely bad and good public pounds. Dr. Frederick L. Thomsen, president of Humane Information Services, visited this pound over a year ago, and his one-day observations agree entirely with those cited in this article.*

In 1973, representatives of the Mississippi Animal Rescue League began visiting the Jackson city dog pound with the permission of Mayor Russell Davis. They had the intention of helping the men at the pound improve conditions there. They had received many reports that conditions at the pound were deplorable and a discredit to the City of Jackson as well as inhumane for the animals.

This report will describe what was found at the pound and what might be done to correct the deficiencies. Nothing in this report is hearsay evidence; all of the conditions described were actually witnessed by the writer.

### CONDITIONS AT THE POUND

The first thing in the morning the attendant in charge of the animals washed out all cages with a high pressure water hose. The animals were not removed from the cages during this cleaning process. This meant that most of the animals were thoroughly wet when the attendant was finished. Puppies remained wet most of the day, encouraging the development of disease, not to mention being a source of great discomfort for the animals. Young kittens and puppies have drowned in the back of the cages during this cleaning. After the animals were fed in the afternoon, the cages were again washed down.

Each afternoon an attendant went to the City jail with a garbage can to get the "food" left over by the prisoners from their lunch. These leftovers consisted of rice, beans, peas, potato peels, lemon rinds, spinach, chicken bones, etc. When the League's representative first went to the pound, the animals were fed nothing but this slop, while there was stored in the storage room hundreds of pounds of commercial dog food.

Six cages were specified as the sick ward. These cages were not isolated from the other cages. Many sick dogs were up for adoption, some with contagious disease. Animals were destroyed only on Tuesday mornings. This meant

badly injured came in on Tuesday afternoon, it was made to wait until the next Tuesday to be put out of its misery (if it lived). These sick and injured animals included dogs which were paralyzed, orphan animals which were unable to eat, dogs and cats with distemper, animals with broken bones, animals in convulsions, etc.

On Tuesday mornings each animal to be destroyed was taken from his cage by means of a noose around his neck, the noose being attached to a pole. The animal was held up by his neck, often with all four legs in the air. His front legs were spread apart and the needle stabbed in the chest. The needle would frequently miss the heart, often hitting the rib bones and also often injecting into the lungs. The animals when not injected properly into the heart would scream in pain and sometimes go into convulsions, retching, clawing, and exhibiting many signs of distress.

While still fully conscious, in many instances, the animals were then thrown into the back of a truck. The men assisting were afraid to hold the animal after it was injected for fear they would absorb the solution through their skin and die also! If the animal crawled off of the pile, he was kicked back onto the pile, often several times. Many times young puppies had to be injected two or three times before losing consciousness.

On Wednesday mornings a truck would back up to the door, and all dogs over 15 pounds on the east side were loaded into the truck and taken to the University Medical Center. This included taking mother dogs away from their newborn puppies (leaving her puppies to starve and her to grieve). On one occasion a dog was observed being taken to the Medical Center while in labor. Sick animals were also taken (including dogs and cats with distemper; one cat observed was in convulsions).

If when animals were sick or frightened they didn't respond the way the attendant wished, they were kicked, or hit over the head or back with a steel pipe. This steel pipe has a loop on the end which is used to catch the animals.

About once a week (usually Tuesday or Wednesday) the animals were moved from their cages, and their cages were steam cleaned. Occasionally an animal was left in a cage when it was cleaned.

The employees at the pound frequently were observed giving erroneous information to the public. They told the people coming to the pound or calling in that they don't usually have to put any animals to sleep. They said they find homes for nearly all the animals, when actually only a small percent were adopted.

When dogs with collars and tags came into the pound, the driver would take the information from the tags and turn it in to the office. No apparent attempt was made to call the owners, although the public was told that they did. We know this as fact, because the League representative has taken this information from the tags and called the owners to see if they had been contacted by the pound.

Very poor records were kept. Often the office had no idea how long the dogs had been there. Frequently the attendant would tell a prospective customer that a dog had been there only a couple of days and then tell another customer a different story about the same dog.

a large part of the day. Dead dogs were picked up and hauled in the same truck with healthy dogs. Dead dogs full of maggots were carried in the same truck with healthy dogs. Most of the drivers' time was spent picking up dead dogs instead of picking up strays. This information was obtained from reports turned in by the drivers themselves.

The City ordinance regulating animals within the City of Jackson which was enacted by Mayor Davis and Commissioners Kelly and Cates was not being enforced. The writer refers specifically to the rabies control ordinance.

The part of the pound building which was built to be a veterinary treatment room is used to house a coke machine and water fountain and as a storeroom.

In short, the pound was in violation of just about every principle of humane operation known to experienced shelter operators. The staff lacked both technical information and incentive to use humane methods of operation.

### IMPROVEMENTS ALREADY MADE

Improvements effected following these observations were made with the permission of the manager.

Three cages were designated for use for housing cats and kittens. Almost complete control of the cats has been given to the Mississippi Animal Rescue League. These cages are cleaned daily. The cages are lined with newspaper, and litter boxes have been installed.

Cat food is now being bought by the City (before there was no food for cats). Now the cats are getting a complete commercial cat food diet. The cats and kittens have food and water before them all day.

The dogs are now being fed a diet of about three-fourths slop and one-fourth dog food (mixed together) once a day.

Jackson veterinarians have volunteered their time to go to the pound on a rotating basis twice a week. They intend to euthanize the animals. They also will make recommendations regarding conditions needing improving.

### CONDITIONS OBSTRUCTING ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Various problems were encountered while trying to make more improvements. (See PUBLIC POUND, page 2, column 1)

March, 1974

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PUBLIC POUND—FROM PAGE 1—

These problems must be overcome if progress is to continue.

The biggest obstacle is the attitudes of those in charge of the pound. These people seem to resent the League's offer to help, and the League's action in going above their heads by contacting the Mayor.

Management apparently does not want the help of the League, nor that of the veterinarians. When the League's veterinarian, one of Jackson's finest, came to the pound to assist in arranging for improvements, the head of the pound was insulting and hard to deal with. He repeatedly claimed that the veterinarian did not know what he was doing.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT

The first and foremost recommendation to be made by the League is the immediate removal from their authority over the pound of certain police officials standing in the way of progress of the Small Animal Control Department.

The League requests that one of the attendants be replaced by a more humane-minded and conscientious person having some knowledge of animal care.

It is recommended that the cages never be washed down with the animals still in them.

It is recommended that the dogs be fed a complete commercial dog food and that the feeding of slop from the jail be discontinued. Puppies should be fed two to three times a day instead of once.

It is urged that all sick animals be isolated from the healthy ones.

The League wants its cooperating veterinarians to be able to visit the pound on Tuesdays and Fridays at their convenience to administer the injections of sodium pentobarbital. Any animal that comes into the pound badly injured or sick should be immediately euthanized. It is recommended that permission be granted that one of the attendants selected by the League, who can be trained by a vet, be allowed to administer the euthanasia to these injured animals.

(Continued top of column 2)

Humane Information Services will send a receipt for dues or a contribution in the amount of \$5.00 or more, or in a lesser amount if the sender so requests, or if same is received in cash, by money order or from a foreign country. Otherwise your cancelled check will serve as a receipt. All dues and contributions are tax deductible.

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☐ My name and address on the reverse side are correct.

☐ My name and address on the reverse side are not correct and should read as follows:

☐ I wish to become a Patron Member and enclose annual dues of \$ ( \$5.00 or more ).

☐ I wish to become an Associate Member and enclose annual dues of \$ ( \$1.00 to \$4.99 ).

☐ I wish to continue my membership and enclose \$ .

☐ I wish to make a contribution and enclose \$ .

The League does not consider the man who now handles the euthanasia to be either competent or humane, and he should never be allowed to administer the needle.

The League requests that all female animals with puppies or kittens under the age of six weeks be immediately euthanized. There are no suitable pens for a mother with litter.

All cages should be thoroughly cleaned daily to keep down odor and disease. The cages should be disinfected at least twice a week.

The League requests that it be given a key to the animal quarters. It would like to be able to get into the pound to check the animals on Sundays.

The public must be told the truth about the population problem. They now are not told that the animals are destroyed.

When dogs with tags come into the

shelter, the owner should be called to tell his animal is there. Drivers should patrol the City more frequently. No dead animals should be picked up and hauled with the healthy animals. Dead animals picked up should be turned over to the sanitation department.

Better records need to be kept of every animal that enters the shelter so that there will be no doubt as to how long any animal has been there.

Adequate adoption regulations should be set up. These regulations should be for the protection of the animal as well as the people. No unsprayed female dogs should be adopted out. No mean dogs should be adopted out or dogs with a history of biting.

The veterinarian's treatment room should be cleared out and made back to what it was intended for. This area is needed by the vets.

PRE-SLAUGHTER HANDLING FOR RITUAL SLAUGHTER

Humane Information Services continues to receive letters asking what is being done to stop the terrible suffering of cattle, calves, sheep and lambs in kosher slaughtering plants. This subject was rather thoroughly explored in our *Report to Humanitarians No. 15* (March, 1971).

The Council for Livestock Protection, Inc., was set up expressly for the purpose of solving this problem. Dr. Frederick L. Thomsen, president of Humane Information Services, is a member of the Advisory Committee of the Council, and has contributed information and advice.

The principal project of the Council to date has been an attempt to develop improved handling and slaughtering techniques for use in kosher slaughtering plants. This has been done by contracting with the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Connecticut, which has just submitted its progress report covering operations through December, 1973.

ENCOURAGING PROGRESS

We are impressed with the work which has been done to date, although this has consisted largely of gathering preliminary data needed and the drawing of plans and specifications for the proposed conveyors and other equipment for handling small animals: sheep, lambs and calves. A holding pen for large cattle, designed to position the animal for the ritual cut without shackling and hoisting while conscious, has been available for some time, and used in a few kosher plants (see *Report No. 15*).

The newly-designed conveyors for smaller animals apparently are a decided improvement over the low-capacity holding pens previously available or suggested, but never used in this country.

John C. Macfarlane, executive director of the Council, states in a letter dated January 24 that "we are confident that funds will be available to conclude the study so that a working model will be ready before the end of 1974." Anyone wishing to help may address the Council at 182 Forbes Road, Braintree, Massachusetts 02184.

Successful completion of the prototype, of course, will mark only the first milestone in efforts to make kosher slaughter humane. There will follow the even more difficult and long-drawn-out efforts to obtain adoption of the equipment and methods, and modification of state and federal humane slaughter laws.

This entire approach to the problem of eliminating the suffering of the estimated five million animals dispatched annually in kosher slaughtering plants in this country is founded on the basic assumption that the ritual cut itself, which quickly severs the carotid artery that carries part of the blood to the brain, is not painful, and that the cessation of the blood flow to the brain results in almost instantaneous unconsciousness and hence no suffering during the subsequent slaughtering operations.

If this basic assumption is false, then the approach to this problem by the Council, which is to substitute a humane for an inhumane method of positioning the animal for the ritual cut, would be inadequate.

THE CONTRARY ASSUMPTION

proceeding on the contrary assumption that slaughter of the conscious animal cannot be made humane by any kind of pre-slaughter handling or positioning of the animal. They apparently believe that the most effective approach to the problem is to utilize legal means of forcing the kosher plants to conform with the provisions of humane slaughter laws applying to non-kosher slaughter. The basis for such action would be on constitutional grounds separating church and state.

Humanitarians, in trying to reach a conclusion regarding the validity of the basic assumptions relating to the painful or painless results of the ritual cut and its immediate aftermath, should be careful not to indulge in anthropomorphism. These assumptions cannot be tested by lay observation. Even physiologists, pathologists and veterinarians who have not followed carefully the scientific evidence relating to this specific question may be unable to reach a valid conclusion.

Until comparatively recently little information bearing on this vital problem was available. However, there is now a more specific body of evidence relating to this question. It is highly technical, and difficult for the layman to understand. However, in a subsequent *Report to Humanitarians* we will attempt to summarize, in terms that can be understood by the lay humanitarian, the scientific evidence bearing on this highly important humane problem.

DIRECTOR OF HUMANE EDUCATION

We received a letter from a member commenting favorably on the article by Arthur B. Brainerd in *Report No. 25* titled "Effects of Different Spay Policies on Receipts and Adoptions of Animals at Shelters and Pounds". But the writer referred to him as "director of humane education for Pinellas County" and we can see that since the article was about Pinellas his title might be confusing. Actually, Burt is director of humane education for Humane Information Services, not the County, serving part-time as an uncompensated volunteer. But he recently undertook a long-term educational project, and is not available.



A statistician has been defined as one who is adept at drawing a straight line from a preconceived notion to a foregone conclusion. And that applies pretty well to some of the "facts" we in the humane movement have been using in trying to convince ourselves and others about what should be done in dealing with the pet population explosion. We are inclined to treat as gospel any statistic quoted by anyone else which suits our purposes.

The principal "facts" about the surplus of dogs and cats that have been available to us are those found in the little leaflets which have been circulating in the humane movement for many years, such as the one entitled "10,000 per hour".

The origin of this mythical figure goes back to antiquity. Nobody seems to know exactly how it was derived, and there is even some dispute over who originated the figure. It is of highly dubious accuracy. Yet, for lack of anything better, Humane Information Services has been using the figures on the total numbers of existing dogs and cats and the numbers of puppies and kittens produced each year that are quoted in this leaflet, after making allowance for the increase in human population since the estimates were made.

But even assuming that these estimates originally were reasonably on the mark, conditions affecting pet ownership have changed greatly since these estimates were made. And these national estimates carry little meaning to the average non-humanitarian such as a city council member. He has no idea of what 10,000 per hour for the country as a whole means in terms of the local community.

The only way to localize the pet population explosion has been to cite the numbers of dogs and cats received and destroyed by the local shelters and pounds. Yet even these simple statistics frequently are lacking. Many shelters and pounds do not keep any reliable and consistent permanent records of receipts and disposition of animals. Some which do are afraid to give out the figures because of possible public misunderstanding and emotional attacks by animal lovers who do not believe in destroying the unwanted animals. Humane Information Services is attempting to collect such information by counties, as a basis for national estimates, but it is a slow process.

#### SURVEYS NEEDED

A wide variety of data is needed for any adequate analysis of the pet population explosion and what should be done to cope with it. Without this information we are very likely to draw unwarranted conclusions, engage in wishful thinking, and come up with "solutions" of the surplus problem which will not get the job done.

Usually, action to deal with the surplus precedes the obtaining of information, which comes later as a result of sometimes costly experience. Either the local humane society or the county or city should make a pet ownership survey before making the decisions.

Humane societies usually have women's auxiliary or other volunteer groups, the members of which don't want to merely lick stamps or fold papers. They long for some work that is constructive and important. Surveys furnish an opportunity to obtain much-needed local information at very little cost of money, and with no unpleasant effort.

#### SURVEY OF PET OWNERSHIP IN ST. PETERSBURG

Humane Information Services decided

largely for the purpose of finding out how much effort and expense is required, and how reliable the results might be.

We had neither the volunteer help nor the money to defray the expenses of a really adequate door-to-door survey, using what the statisticians call a "probability sample", calling back to interview non-respondents, etc. So we decided on a telephone survey, using a random sample of listings in the St. Petersburg telephone book, selected so

## Pet Ownership Survey Yields Surprising Results

each and every phone subscriber had an equal chance of being included in the sample. But our sample was too small, and the follow-up of non-respondents too sketchy, to meet the rigid demands of a scientific survey. For some breakdowns the sample is too small to make differences between groups statistically significant. But we do believe that the overall results of the survey are sufficiently reliable for the general purposes indicated in the following analysis.

#### PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS OWNING PETS AND NUMBER OWNED

Thirty-nine (39) percent of the households surveyed own a dog or cat, or both. This was about in line with expectations. Rather surprisingly, however, the proportions were not greatly different for the low, medium and high income areas of the City: 38, 42 and 34 percent respectively.

Also surprising to us, since St. Petersburg has somewhat more than its share of widows, who frequently have a preference for cats, the proportion of households owning dogs (31 percent) was double the proportion owning cats (15 percent). Six (6) percent of the households, and 17 percent of the pet owners, own both a dog and a cat. The validity of the cat figures cited will be discussed later.

The average number of dogs per surveyed household is .392, of cats .238, and of pets (dogs and cats combined) .630. For the households owning dogs, the average number per household is 1.28 and for cat owners 1.61 cats.

There are an estimated 113,880 households in the City of St. Petersburg, 270,309 in the County of Pinellas, and 62,874,000 in the United States.

The survey indicates that there are 35,303 dog and 17,082 cat-owning households in St. Petersburg. When allowance is made for duplication, households owning both a dog and a cat (6,833), the total number of households owning a dog or cat or both is 45,552. They own a total of 72,690 dogs and cats, or 45,188 dogs and 27,502 cats.

In Pinellas County there are 83,796 dog and 40,546 cat-owning households. After making allowance for duplication, there are 108,123 dog or cat-owning households. They own a total of 172,539 dogs and cats, consisting of 107,259 dogs and 65,280 cats.

#### EXTRAPOLATION TO UNITED STATES

Although extrapolation from such a sample to the United States obviously is extremely risky, it will be interesting to see what the St. Petersburg results might indicate to be the situation in the country as a whole. For what the projection may be worth, it indicates that in the United States there are 25,150,000 households owning a dog or cat or both, with a total of 24,948,000

#### THE PURINA SURVEY

The Purina Pet Care Center has conducted or utilized surveys made by others covering all areas of the country, to arrive at estimates of the pet population which are partially comparable with the projections for the United States from our St. Petersburg survey.

#### DOG ESTIMATES

The Purina survey estimated that 42 percent of U. S. households own dogs, as compared with our 31 percent. Part of this difference may be accounted for by city size, since Purina found that dog ownership as a percentage of total households varied from 55 percent for communities under 2,500 population to 36 percent for

large cities. St. Petersburg is a medium-size city, but it has many apartment houses and probably is more representative in these respects of the Northeastern section of the country than of the South. But St. Petersburg has somewhat more than its share of retired people, and the Purina survey found that for the age group 55 years and over the incidence of dog ownership was much less, only 27 percent. This may well account for the difference in our percentages.

Projecting the St. Petersburg figures to the U. S., an estimate of 25 million owned dogs is obtained. This is remarkably similar to the Purina estimate, which admittedly has a larger probable error than their estimate of the number of households owning dogs, because apparently they found difficulty in satisfactorily estimating the number of dogs per household. The St. Petersburg survey included this information in detailed form. The Purina estimate is 25 to 27 million total dogs in the U. S., and our completely independent projection from the St. Petersburg survey is 25 million! This is with no allowance for strays which may have been made by Purina.

#### CAT ESTIMATES

For cats, however, we find a very wide discrepancy. The Purina survey indicated that 24 percent of U. S. households own one or more cats, whereas our St. Petersburg survey shows only 15 percent. The proportion of households owning both a dog and a cat was 13 percent for the Purina survey, compared with only six (6) percent for St. Petersburg.

Projecting the St. Petersburg survey to the U. S. results in an estimate that the total of owned cats in the country is 15,841,000. This is far below the Purina "rough estimate" that "there may be as high as 28 million cats, owned and stray". Our St. Petersburg survey is for owned cats only, and we have no acceptable way of estimating the number of stray cats and do not know of any others who do. Taking this into account, there is perhaps not too much difference between the two estimates.

#### COMPARISON WITH TRADITIONAL ESTIMATES

Both the St. Petersburg and the Purina estimates are far below those commonly circulating in the humane movement, as exemplified by the leaflet "10,000 per hour". The latter contains an estimate of 90 million dogs and cats as the current pet population, and 85 million puppies and kittens born every year. These estimates apparently were arrived at when there were only 48 million households in the U. S. If we now adjust for the increase to 63 million households, even without allowing for more pets per household, we would supposedly have 118 million dogs and cats on hand, breeding 112 million puppies and kittens each year, or 12,785 per

## SURVEY—FROM PAGE 3

These large numbers roll off the tongue with sonorous effect upon anyone who does not stop to evaluate their authenticity or meaning. But to the non-humanitarians, who are expected to accept our figures, these ballooned estimates may seem questionable, and if questioned they are indefensible. In any event, for most purposes local figures are much more significant than national estimates, even those having some basis of authenticity. We recommend consideration by every city or county humane society of a pet ownership survey for its own community. This can serve many uses, including appeals for local governmental financial aid and getting general newspaper and other publicity about the need for surplus control measures.

If enough societies are interested, we will be glad to prepare and send free of charge sample forms and simple instructions, if you agree to send us the results of your survey. These could then be combined to furnish a better indication of conditions in the country as a whole.

## NEED FOR OFFICIAL PET CENSUS

The difficulties involved in estimating even the total number of pets existing at any one time show how much we need to have dog and cat ownership included in the next U. S. Census. If all humane organizations and many hundreds of individual humanitarians would write to the Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C. 20233, insisting that this information is vitally needed for implementing important and costly animal control programs across the country, it might be included. Businessmen successfully demand the inclusion of many items which they use in making marketing and advertising analyses which are no more potentially useful than such statistics on pet ownership.

MALE AND FEMALE PETS--  
NEUTERED AND UNNEUTERED

Fifty-one (51) percent of the dogs owned by the surveyed households are female, and 44 percent of the cats. Fifty-three (53) percent of the female dogs are spayed, and of female cats 55 percent.

These surprisingly high percentages of females spayed may reflect higher standards of pet care in St. Petersburg than in most areas of the country, or the possibility that households with telephones are better in this respect than others. Or, it may be due to deficiencies of the sample.

Of the male dogs owned by these households, only 28 percent are neutered, but 48 percent of the male cats are "fixed". This may reflect the fact that male cats are relatively more objectionable around the house, spraying the furniture, sometimes having an odor, and coming home from cat orgies all chewed up. Moreover, the appearance of many unneutered male cats, with their square heads and other features, is much less pleasing to many cat owners, relative to females, than is the relative appearance of male and female dogs to dog owners. And still another factor responsible for the differing percentages neutered is the lower cost of neutering cats than for dogs.

Applying these percentages to the figures previously adduced, we arrive at the following estimates:

There are 10,832 unspayed owned female dogs in the City of St. Petersburg, 25,710 in Pinellas County, and 5,980,000 in the United States.

For cats, the numbers of unspayed owned females are, respectively, 5,445; 12,925; and 3,006,000.

SEATTLE LICENSE DATA

percent of the male and female dogs and cats combined are sterilized (spayed or neutered). This may be compared with the corresponding actual license figures in the City of Seattle, Washington, which has a license fee differential for sterilized and unsterilized pets. Just 48.8 percent of the total number of dogs and cats licensed in 1973 were sterilized. Since this differential has been in effect for some time, and would tend to encourage more spaying and neutering, the St. Petersburg survey results seem to agree remarkably well with the actual experience in Seattle.

CONFINEMENT AS A  
SUBSTITUTE FOR SPAYING

Our survey indicates that an amazing proportion of owners does consistently succeed in keeping its unspayed female pets bottled up in the home during estrus, and hence from breeding.

If these indications of the success of ordinary pet owners in substituting confinement during estrus for spaying, in order to prevent breeding, are anywhere near correct, and if the proportion of females that are spayed is not too far off, we might conclude that:

(1) A much larger proportion than has been commonly assumed of dogs and cats received at shelters and pounds represents pets given up because the owner has died, or is moving to an apartment, or for some other reason finds it impracticable to continue to own a pet, as opposed to the current production of surplus animals. With any given production of puppies and kittens, the greater the mobility of the human population and the larger the proportion moving into apartments, the greater will be the numbers of surplus animals received at shelters and pounds.

(2) Feral dogs and cats give rise to a larger proportion of the strays and litters brought in than has been assumed.

(3) The commercial pet trade including backyard breeders constitutes an even more important source of surplus animals, as compared with the ordinary household pet owner, than we have assumed.

All three of these possible conclusions point to the relative ineffectiveness of "educating" ordinary pet owners about the importance of neutering, and the relatively greater importance of other animal control measures.

## WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

If we are to stop or greatly reduce the flow of unspayed female dogs and cats into the pet population by any means, including spaying, we must first determine their sources--where they are coming from. The St. Petersburg survey gives some indication.

The sources of dogs and cats are quite different. Forty-three (43) percent of the dogs owned were obtained from friends, but only 31 percent of the cats. Most (42 percent) of the cats were just strays, breeding in the open or dropped by unthinking and irresponsible people in somebody else's yard. Only eight (8) percent of the dogs were strays taken in.

Twenty-six (26) percent of the dogs owned were obtained from a breeder, kennel or pet shop, but only 13 percent of the cats were from these sources, and none of these was from a pet shop. A humane society shelter or public pound was the source of 12 percent of the dogs but only four (4) percent of the cats.

Five (5) percent of the dogs and nine (9) percent of the cats were from "other" sources, including litters raised in the same household. This small proportion indicates that "outside" sources of pet animals, rather than breeding in the home by which the pet is owned, are the most important.

SOURCES OF UNSPAID FEMALE PETS

in the pet population originate? pause a moment while we humanitarians hide our blushes. Seventeen (17) percent of the unspayed female dogs were obtained from some humane society shelter! Breeders, kennels and pet shops accounted for 33 percent, and "friends" 44 percent. Less than six (6) percent were strays.

For cats it is again a different story. As would be expected, most of unspayed female cats owned were strays (56 percent), with 22 percent obtained from friends and 22 percent from other sources including newspaper ads and inheritance. None of the unspayed female cats in the survey sample was from a breeder, pet shop or shelter. The sample is too small to pick up the very small percentages attributable to other sources.

These data again tend to support contention of Humane Information Services that the individual dog owner is not the only important source of unspayed females moving into the pet population. About half are from shelter pounds, breeders and pet shops.

For cats, however, it is evident responsibility rests just where it always has been assumed to be--with the ordinary pet owner. Here is where we encounter the doting mother who watches her children to see how life begins. Here is where we find the furtive mother off, and the too-kindhearted child mothers and widows who just can't put the cute little female kit to sleep, when they can provide it with a good home" (where it can continue its breeding cycle). In the last analysis for cats, the real source of the surplus is this too-kindhearted animal lover "just can't stand to see a life snuffed out" and "holds all life to be sacred even that of a poor little innocent kitten who can't help it if she happens to be a female" (We have one of these maternal lovers next-door, who has taken a female stray cat which has had successive litters. When we offered to take it to the shelter, we were refused, the little girl of the house looked at us as if we were Dr. Frankenstein!)

HOUSEHOLDS' CONCERN  
ABOUT ANIMAL WELFARE

The households surveyed were asked if they are concerned about animal welfare. In response to questions, it was explained this meant not just about dogs and cats, but all animals, and such matters of welfare as humane slaughter. The answers to this and associated questions were extremely encouraging, and will be analyzed in a separate article to appear in a forthcoming issue.

## JIGSAW PUZZLE

In *Report to Humanitarians No. 2* (June, 1973) we presented the Humane Information Services' five-point program for eliminating or substantially reducing the surplus. In *Report Nos. 25* and *27* we have presented facts necessary to implement this program: the effect on adoptions and contributions of prohibiting the adoption of unspayed females; the results of spay refund contracts with adopters; the contribution to the surplus by backyard breeders, puppy mills and pet shops; and finally the present survey of pet ownership sources of the surplus. But we still lack information on how the surplus is disposed of, which is now being surveyed by our director of field services.

When these different parts of the puzzle are at hand, we will be prepared to assemble them into a comprehensive and detailed program for surplus control, based on hard facts. This will be presented in a forthcoming issue.

We invite criticism, even refutation of the survey results described in this article. We seek only the truth.

# Discouraged Humanitarians

## ..... What can they do?

In the many welcome letters we receive from members, one of the most frequently occurring themes is the frustration and helplessness which so many humanitarians feel. Progress in improving the lot of animals seems to them to be so tediously slow. Sometimes it appears that almost nothing is being accomplished.

The shelters and pounds continue to receive their pitiful daily quotas of unwanted pets, despite all of the talk about spaying and neutering. So-called euthanasia is only a euphemism in many shelters and pounds. Cruel individuals continue to abuse their own animals. Animals used in making movies and television shows are subjected to more cruelties than ever before. Rodeos flourish. Hunting has become a big-time sport. Ninety (90) percent of the world's food animals continues to be slaughtered by methods reminiscent of the torture racks of the Inquisition. More millions of animals than ever are subjected to all kinds of abuses in the biomedical laboratories. After all the talking and writing, millions of fur-bearers still are subjected to the tortures of the leghold trap. And in most other parts of the world, the unbelievable brutality toward animals is even worse than in our own backyards.

Enough to make any kindhearted animal lover despair! And worst of all, many humanitarians feel so helpless individually to do anything about it. That is what seems to disturb them most.

But there is something they can do. Many things, in fact. Even if a person is confined to a wheelchair, or has no income except Social Security. All that is needed is sufficient dedication to helping animals.

This is the first of a series of articles on what individuals as individuals can do. In this issue we deal with letter writing.

### LETTER WRITING

Most humanitarians at one time or another have written letters to Congressmen, newspaper editors or local officials about some humane problem. And there are scores who engage in regular letter writing as a routine humane activity. This does a great deal of good, but if more effectively directed it could accomplish much more.

According to the mail we receive, some have given up their letter writing in disgust because they seemed to get no results. Particularly discouraging to many of our correspondents is the apparent lack of response to their letters to Congress. The replies they receive in answer to requests for support of humane bills generally are disappointing. Evasive run-arounds! "Just a lot of garbage," one humanitarian calls these letters, which she recently forwarded to our sister society, the National Association for Humane Legislation, which has been conducting a campaign to get letters to Congress in support of the Gunter bill, H.R. 8055 and H.R. 10755. This bill would require humane slaughter of animals in foreign meat packing plants exporting meat products to the United States.

Actually, the non-committal nature of these replies should not disturb the letter writers too much. If they were in the vanguard of those who wrote, the Congressmen may not yet have received enough mail on the subject to make up their minds. So, their replies are guarded. Most legislators hesitate to commit themselves on anything before time to vote on the measure, unless they are to co-sponsor a bill. The non-committal replies do not mean that they have not been influenced by the incoming letters. A non-committal reply is better than a flat turndown or no reply at all.

But even an adverse reply is no cause to give up. NAHL tells us about one Congressman whose early response to letters about the Gunter bill stated his opposition because he thought the bill constituted foreign trade discrimination. Later, he was convinced by let-

ter, Mrs. Charlotte L. B. Parks, of Maine, and he has since co-sponsored the bill, reintroduced again as H.R. 11473. That shows the great impact of letters, and the importance of not giving up.

### THE BEAGLE EXPERIMENT

Since the routine news release by the United States Air Force last year announcing the toxicity experiment to be conducted on 200 beagles, almost 30,000 letters have been received by members of Congress and the Pentagon protesting the use of beagle puppies for this purpose. This is said to be the greatest volume of mail involving the armed forces inspired by any subject since Truman fired MacArthur. It is claimed to be triple the number of letters received on the My Lai massacre. The letters about the 200 beagles received by the House Armed Services Committee are said to be actually greater in volume than those received on the subject of the Vietnam War! Congressman Aspin, who has objected to the experiment, received about 6,000 letters.

Yet, the only specific concession to these protests to date appears to be a statement that as far as possible other animals, including pigs and goats, will be substituted for the beagles, that adult dogs rather than puppies will be used, and that every effort will be made to see that the animals suffer as little as possible. It also has been said that the Defense Department will reexamine its policies with respect to the use of animals in research.

The failure of this virtual blitz of letters from animal lovers to obtain any real results to date should not discourage the letter writers. At the very least, the letters did serve as a strong reminder to their recipients of how many people are interested in animal welfare.

But think how much good might have resulted if all of this effort and expense for postage had gone into a campaign for something attainable, such as the Gunter bill. Here is proposed legislation which would affect not just a few hundred but many millions of animals annually, which now undergo much needless suffering. Its potential for eliminating animal suffering is far greater than anything that might be done about the beagle experiment. There are no important vested interests in this country opposed to the Gunter bill. Nobody can claim that continuation of inhumane slaughter will help to save human lives. Even the foreign meat packers will be benefited, since humane methods are more efficient than the crude and cruel procedures now in use. Only apathy and indifference can prevent the passage of the Gunter bill. It is under such circumstances that a flood of letters can be most effective. Yet a pitifully minute number of letters, compared with those engendered by the beagle experiment, have gone to Congress in support of the Gunter bill. It may be said with great confidence that if the same volume of letters had been sent about the Gunter bill, it would have become law by

Even the comparatively few letters about the Gunter bill have brought a decided change in prospects for its passage. Several years ago when Dr. Frederick L. Thomsen, president of the National Association for Humane Legislation, first tried to obtain introduction of a bill requiring humane slaughter in foreign meat packing plants that export to this country, no member of the House Agriculture Committee would serve as sponsor. Even when, in 1973, Congressman Gunter, of Florida, agreed to introduce the bill, it just reposed in Committee like the many other humane bills now decorating the filing cabinets of other committees. Mr. Gunter worked hard, but to no avail, to get the Committee to hold hearings on his bill.

But then the mail in support of the bill, largely generated by the National Association for Humane Legislation, began to reach Congress, especially members of the Agriculture Committee. Mr. Gunter sent a letter to all members of Congress inviting co-sponsorship of his bill, and 17 responded. But still the Committee would not move to consider and act on the bill. NAHL, in a special project under the leadership of Mrs. Parks, set out to inform as many as possible humanitarians in the State of Washington about the bill, and the extremely influential position with respect to the bill of Washington Congressman Thomas S. Foley, chairman of the Subcommittee on Livestock and Grains of the House Agriculture Committee. Once he understood from his constituents the nature and importance of the bill, Representative Foley assured Mr. Gunter that he would hold hearings on the bill as soon as possible in 1974.

That is where the bill now stands. Congressman Gunter plans to issue a third appeal for additional co-sponsors, in order to take advantage of letters received by potential co-sponsors since his previous bill was introduced. The bill would not have gotten even this far, like most of the other humane bills now lying neglected in Congress, had it not been for the considerable amount of mail generated by NAHL and a few other humane societies that have lent their support to the bill. Of course, successful hearings, movement through the Committee and passage by the House will take even more mail. Once acted upon by the House, the bill has a good chance for faster action in the Senate, NAHL informs us.

This is an example of the good effects of letter writing. If the letters are in behalf of something which has a reasonable chance of significant accomplishment, if they are directed at the right parties at the right times, they can be highly effective. But they must also be persistent. Just blowing off steam in one big burst of indignation, as in the case of the beagle experiment, will accomplish little or nothing. It is the continuing pressure until some specific and important objective is accomplished that is needed. Humane Information Services, as a tax-exempt humane society, does not participate in campaigns for legislation, but many of its members also are members of NAHL, and have received the *Humane Legislation Digest* from that society giving the details about what letters are needed. NAHL is located at 675 Pinellas Point Drive South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33705.

### LETTER WRITING HARD WORK

Letter writing involves a lot of work, if it is done effectively. Humanitarians who are fatigued by writing a single letter to their own Congressman should consider the following letter received by NAHL, which has passed it on to us. We can reproduce it here, since it illustrates the great effort involved in



## Florida Legislature Starts Action to Outlaw Use of Live Rabbits in Training Greyhounds

As we go to press we have been notified by the National Association for Humane Legislation, our sister society, that the Florida Legislature has taken a first step to outlaw the very cruel use of live rabbits in training greyhound racing dogs.

A bill to accomplish this purpose, SB-1118, was prefiled by Senator William M. Gillespie, of New Smyrna Beach, at the request made in 1973 of the National Association for Humane Legislation. NAHL believed that despite a court injunction obtained last year, prohibiting such use of live rabbits, it is desirable to obtain legislation specifically outlawing the practice in Florida, since another court in South Florida refused to grant an injunction.

A hearing on Senator Gillespie's bill was held February 25 in Tallahassee, by the Senate Commerce Committee. Evidence was presented to the Committee by a representative of NAHL that such use of live animals is cruel, unnecessary, and bad public relations for Florida's tourist industry.

Also in attendance at the hearing were representatives of the Leon County Humane Society and several other humane organizations.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend the bill favorably (for passage) to the Senate, which will meet in April. NAHL now is arranging for a sponsor for a companion bill in the House of Representatives, and will ask its Florida members to write to their State Representatives and Senators in behalf of the bill.

In Australia, which prohibits such use of live rabbits, a greyhound trainer recently attempted to substitute live chickens. Trainers in Florida also might try to use fowl, or even cats, unless their use also is prohibited. This is done in the bill introduced by Senator Gillespie.

Since live rabbits are used for training greyhounds in a number of other states, including Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, societies outside Florida may be interested in the written brief which was presented to each member of the Senate Committee by the National Association for Humane Legislation, and which will go to all members of the Legislature when it convenes. A reduced facsimile is shown on page 7.

After the hearing the NAHL representative was busy interviewing members of the Legislature about other animal bills

while another society's representative who had little or nothing to do with introduction of the bill or the Committee's action, was calling on the news media taking exclusive credit for the action. NAHL always is glad to share credit for any accomplishment regardless of relative contributions, but in the dog-eat-dog competition for publicity which seems to govern the actions of some other humane societies, such cooperation is difficult.

### PUPPY MILLS AND PET SHOPS

In Report No. 26 (December, 1973), an article about the commercial pet trade's contribution to the pet surplus we said: "It would require every page of this Report to catalog all of the many deplorable conditions which are found in the highly commercialized part of the pet trade. Humane Information Services will perform this important service at a later date."

It now appears that it will not be necessary to do so. The Humane Society of the United States, perhaps as an indirect result of our article on the subject, has come out with "Report on Abuses in the Pet Industry". It does not go into some of the alternative methods of dealing with the problem that we intend to cover later, but is an excellent description of the puppy mill and the related pet shops.

### DISCOURAGED—FROM PAGE 5—

is from Hazel Watts, of New Hampshire, one of the most indefatigable and effective letter writers in the humane movement.

*"The Committee chairman should have received at least 27 letters from me and my friends. Those Congressmen on that Committee from California should have received three letters from California people plus me from New Hampshire, and there are three Congressmen from California on it. Congressman Kyros, of Maine, on the Committee should have received two letters from my friends in Maine plus some from Charlotte Parks and her friends. Congressmen from New York should have received two letters from my New York people, and there are three New York Congressmen on the Committee. Massachusetts Congressmen should have received two letters from Massachusetts people, and there are two Massachusetts Congressmen on it. I'm only speaking of my friends who live in these states. Every Congressman on that Committee got at least four letters I'd say from just me and my friends. I and my friends all write to the chairman plus about three others; only I write to them all. I give each of my friends about three others to write, too, besides the chairman. I go through the whole Committee, then if I still have friends left that haven't written, I start over and go through the Committee again. I and my friends also wrote to the Senate Committee. My own Senator Norris Cotton is on that Committee, and I've got 20 other friends who live in New Hampshire who write."*

### QUALITY OF LETTERS

Almost as important as the number of letters is their quality.

We may as well admit it, a considerable segment of the public looks upon us "animal lovers" as "those animal nuts". They tend to discount what any of us says because of the extravagant language a few of us use in public.

To these over-emotional humanitarians an "animal experimenter" becomes an "animal butcher", that neighborhood youth with his new Christmas shotgun out to get a rabbit becomes a "sadistic killer". Indignant animal lovers who protested the beagle experiment wrote to their Congressmen: "Don't use beagles.

ticsians". How can the writers of such letters expect a sympathetic response from the Congressmen?

Every member of Congress, most any government official, almost any newspaper editor becomes accustomed to these denunciatory diatribes and inevitably associates them with any correspondence on animal welfare, even that received from the most reasonable and tactful humanitarians. As a result, the sensible letter writers encounter a credibility gap. They, along with the animals, must suffer for the sins of the denouncers! Fanatical, extremist letter writers do far more harm than good. If they really want to help the animals, they will think twice before using such language.

To be effective, letters need not be typed. In fact, well-worded letters, which do not ramble but get right to the point, written legibly in longhand, may carry even more weight than typed ones. Even if you are not a master of English, your letters will be effective if they are reasonable in tone and appear genuine. Don't copy some other writer's words. Use your own.

### REPLIES TO YOUR LETTERS

Especially frustrating to some humanitarians is the apparent lack of response to letters written to newspaper and magazine editors, television broadcasters, and business firms. Local papers may print the letter, but nobody later comments on it. It just seems lost in the shuffle. But that does not mean it has been useless.

People do read your letters--nearly always. Some will reply with what is obviously a form letter. But your letter has been at least counted, and if quite a few are received, the big boss will be told that they got so many letters of protest last week.

Carl Whipple, of Bedford, New Hampshire, received a letter from CBS which includes the following paragraph:

*"Many subjects for our regularly scheduled news broadcasts, as well as our special broadcasts, are born of our viewers' suggestions such as yours. Mail time is an important time of day around here. Our mail is not read just once, but several times by several people. In this way, we not only get topical ideas for broadcast but we learn how we can improve every aspect of our pro-*

Letters to a syndicated columnist receive no reply unless used in the column, of which there is only a small chance. But still they will be read--at least by the columnist's secretary.

The staff of Humane Information Services is so busy, seven days a week, that we do not find the time to write many letters as we would like to editors, television stations, newspaper editors, columnists and business firms. Some of those we do write get results. For example, we received this from Ann Landers, the widely-read columnist, in reply to our protest against a statement unfair to animals: *"You are right. I was wrong. I intend to correct myself in an upcoming column."*

We received a reply from the Jay Norris Corporation, of Freeport, New York, which advertised its electric shock rod as being "Fine for training animals". They replied to our protest as follows: *"We have advised our advertising agency that they should adjust the copy in conformity with your letter."* If you want one of these electric shock rods to "Zap molesters with 4,000 volts", we have no objection, so long as it is used on human malefactors and not innocent animals!

### LETTERS ARE THE KEY TO HUMANE ACCOMPLISHMENT

On every hand, opportunities exist to help the animals by writing letters. Other animal lovers devote years of their lives to humane work, without presumably the general run of less-dedicated humanitarians can find the time to write a few letters each week. If only those who read our Report to Humanitarians would do this, the results would astonish us.

If you do write a letter to the editor of a newspaper, and it is printed please clip and send us a copy, marking it with the full name of the paper, the place of publication, and the date (we just received an important clipping having no name or date). If you receive replies to your other letters, please send them to us, or copies. That helps us to keep in touch. We cannot acknowledge receipt of such materials, but they will be read and used. If you write a legislator, please send the reply to NAHL, since HHS does not do any legis-

## LETTERS—FROM PAGE 8

subject. We were wrong. The following letter gives some more interesting firsthand experience. (If any veterinarian does not agree, please write.)

"About fleas on cats and dogs--tell your readers to give the cat about a quarter teaspoonful of brewer's yeast once a day. For a dog, increase according to size. The yeast causes the animal's skin to be repellent to fleas, and is good for the animal's welfare, anyway."--Mrs. Joseph T. Eddy, Winter Park, Florida.

## HUMANITARIANS NOT RETARDED!

"The Report on puppy mills was really excellent. It seems incredible that so few individuals can put together so much excellent material and tell it like it should be told."--Mrs. Miles E. Nickerson, President, Boothbay Region Humane Society, Boothbay Harbor, Maine.

## REPLY:

Thank you for the compliment. One reason others do not offer the thorough, factual analyses that we attempt to present is that they have a low opinion of humanitarians' intelligence and attention span. We know that many humane society officers have the erroneous idea that "the little old ladies in tennis shoes" must be treated like retarded children. True, some long-established animal societies have grown rich doing just that, because there are a good number of animal lovers who refuse to think, and must be appealed to solely through the emotions. But the unexpectedly great success of Humane Information Services shows that there also are many humanitarians who are far beyond the baby food stage, and are quite capable of digesting material requiring intelligence and concentration.

## RESENTS OUR "ATTACK ON STENOGRAPHERS"!

"I received Report No. 26 and am disgusted with your attack on a stenographer ... A top stenographer is as much needed in our society as is a top surgeon or technician. Being a stenographer does not preclude her from having a brain and using it. I hope she will continue to tell it like it is, and I for one don't believe veterinarians belong as directors in any humane organization ... How they (the Humane Society of the United States) think they can pursue the laboratory problem vigorously with so many researchers on their board is a puzzle."--Mrs. Alice A. Grant, Los Angeles, California.

## REPLY:

You obviously are an educated person--perhaps a stenographer?--and might be expected to really read our Report before criticizing it. If you had, you would have seen that we did not attack stenographers. We have only the highest regard for them, having depended on them for so much over a long professional career. If our secretary-treasurer, who is a stenographer, and as smart as any, were to resign, your senior editor

## National Association for Humane Legislation, Inc.

675 PINELLAS POINT DRIVE SOUTH, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA 33705

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT SB-118  
introduced by Senator William M. Gillespie

1. Is the use of live rabbits for training greyhounds really inhumane?

**Answer:** This is about as cruel a use of animals as can be found anywhere. For example, a live rabbit is tied, head down, to a rapidly-moving training lure. The dogs chase the rabbit, catch it, and mangle or kill it. If the rabbit is not killed, it is used again with fresh dogs in pursuit. As a retail price advertiser might say: Compare with the rack and torture wheels of the Inquisition.

2. Is the use of live animals as training lures for greyhounds really necessary in order to produce acceptable racing dogs?

**Answer:** No! Some dog trainers say that it is not necessary, and do not use live rabbits. And greyhounds in Australia, where dog racing is very popular, are trained without the use of live animals of any kind. A humane training device called the Jack-A-Lure is available here, and as soon as the use of live rabbits is prohibited, no doubt other devices will be developed.

3. What evidence is there that rabbits are not used in Australia?

**Answer:** The applicable law in New South Wales, which has been adopted in essentially the same form in other states, is as follows:

"Whosoever promotes or takes part in the coursing with a dog or dogs of any animal kept or released for the purpose of being coursed, or keeps or has in his custody, possession, care or control at any place used for the training or racing of greyhounds any animal for the purpose of using it in connection with such training or racing, or keeps or has in his custody, possession, care or control at any other place any animal for the purpose of the training or racing of greyhounds, shall, upon summary conviction, be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or to both such penalty and imprisonment."

4. Why, then, do some trainers in the United States oppose elimination of the use of live animals in training greyhounds?

**Answer:** Essentially, because they do not want to bother with the development, testing and adoption of humane methods. The situation is similar to that which existed among meat packers before adoption of the federal and state humane slaughter laws. They were afraid of interference with their normal procedures which had been in use for many years. But once they were faced with the necessity of doing something, they found that humane methods were more convenient and less costly than the old ones. We have letters to this effect written by Florida meat packers after the Florida humane slaughter law went into effect.

The kind of Western jackrabbits used in training greyhounds costs money. Trainers, when they put their minds to it, will find less costly methods are better than the present inhumane ones.

5. How about the greyhound racing industry, aside from training? Is it affected by this proposed legislation?

**Answer:** Yes, indeed. An industry as large as this must be very much concerned over its public image. It cannot afford to become known as a "sport" that condones cruelty. It should be solidly behind this bill.

6. And how about Florida and tourism?

**Answer:** A recent survey found that over half of the people are concerned about animal welfare. Whether some interests based on exploitation of animal mistreatment like it or not, the State of Florida and its tourist industry cannot afford to condone obvious cruelty to animals. By passing this bill, the Legislature will demonstrate that it is concerned about animal welfare.

would be completely lost.

The one and only thing we said about stenographers in Report No. 26 is that Congress, scientists and the general public will not accept a stenographer's evaluation of a highly technical biomedical problem if it is disputed by accepted medical experts. So, if we hope to obtain acceptance of our ideas about "replacement", it is necessary to win the confidence and cooperation of some of those whose opinions on such technical matters are accepted. That will not be accomplished by denouncing them publicly in the most vitriolic terms. It may bring in many contributions, but can only hurt the animals.

Humane Information Services agrees that anyone who has a potential serious conflict of interest should not be a member of the board of directors of any humane society. And that applies to veterinarians, who have obvious potential economic conflicts yet are found on the boards of many societies--but not that of Humane Information Services nor, we believe, the HSUS.

Perhaps you have jumped to the conclusion that "Doc" is a veterinarian. You must know that Ph.D.'s are awarded as the highest academic degree in many different intellectual disciplines. Doc's Ph.D. is in economics. He uses the title, "Doctor", even though no longer practicing his profession, because it provides quick and easy recognition and acceptance almost anywhere, which helps Doc in his work for the animals. For the same reasons, M.D.'s and D.V.M.'s continue to use their titles after retirement.

## NOT PARTIAL TO HSUS

"Being a former member of HSUS (board of directors) is no doubt the reason you so often champion this group."--Mrs. Alice A. Grant, Los Angeles, California.

"... since Doc is an alumnus of the HSUS, a former member of its board of directors, I would assume he's still wearing the old school tie, so how objective could he really be?"--Miss Helen L. Linn, Westfield, New Jersey.

"In your Reports you seem to be too critical of other organizations. I belong to the HSUS, and if their activities reported in their news letter are true, then I think they do some good work."--Miss Lila A. Livingston, Winter Park, Florida.

## REPLY:

Perhaps a good test of our impartiality is that we receive letters which imply that we are unduly partial to, or unduly critical of, the HSUS. It seems to depend on whether our agreement or disagreement with the HSUS is in accord with the letter writers' views.

Doc's having been a member of the board of HSUS does not influence us in the slightest. As a matter of fact, Doc left the HSUS board by mutual consent, because of the uproar from antivivisectionist members of the HSUS when Doc helped write and vigorously supported the original Rogers bill for the protection of laboratory animals. But Doc has been good friends with the society and its staff since then; he does not allow personal grudges to interfere with his animal work.

The spirit of cooperation between HSUS and HIS is sufficiently strong that we can differ with each other on matters of policy without endangering our ability to work together for the good of the animals. Because of these good working relationships, we at HIS feel free to comment frankly on HSUS policies and programs under circumstances that would compel silence with reference to some other societies which brook no differences of opinion and view such as personal attacks. In all such comments, even if critical, we seek to help, not hurt, the HSUS. But not because we are an alumnus of its board!

## CLERGY COULD HELP

"The humane cause could well use the potential power of church members if the clergy itself were not so apathetic ... I was shocked to learn that fox hunting is actually being promoted almost under my nose (by) a minister actually consenting to be photographed in the role of God's servant, blessing a cruel and one-sided contest."--Mrs. James Aitchison, Holland, Michigan.

"The only HIS viewpoint to which I have taken exception in various Reports is with regard to religious organizations, their leaders and (by implication) their members ... Expressions of hostility, contempt or condescension towards the major religious organizations as such are unlikely to do any good and may do harm, by putting off people whose sympathy and help is indispensable if the humane movement is to make any considerable progress toward its cherished goals."--Alfred R. Babcock, Summit, New Jersey.

## REPLY:

We agree fully that it is important to cultivate, not antagonize, the churches and the clergy. On the other hand, nobody will or can successfully do this unless the reasons why the churches are indifferent to animal welfare are explored and understood. It is one thing to discuss the problem among ourselves as humanitarians, and another to publicly denounce



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR . . . .

### MORE LETTERS THIS ISSUE

Because we had to omit from our last issue all except one letter to the editor, this time we are giving you two pages of very worthwhile comments from our readers. It pays to know what other humanitarians are thinking about our mutual problems.

### READERS AGREE WITH OUR ANALYSIS OF PET POPULATION CONTROL

"I am in complete agreement with all you say on the pet population ... Any society that adopts out unaltered animals is defeating its purpose."--Mrs. Peter C. Marchbank, Gaines, Michigan.

"We heartily agree with you on how to prevent the pet population explosion, and feel it is the only answer to the problem. Merely finding homes for unwanted pets creates more problems."--Mrs. J. Girardi, Crows Nest Pass SPCA, Coleman, Alberta, Canada.

#### REPLY:

What an entrancing name: "Crows Nest Pass". It has the flavor of mountain dew, wildlife. Much better than "St. Petersburg"! But at this time of year (winter), we'll take our pelicans, and you can have your crows.

Not everyone agrees with these views on how to eliminate the surplus, as shown by the next two letters.

### COLD, CUNNING AND CALLOUS!

"In regards to your pet population article, your cold, cunning 'frank' analysis leaves much to be desired ... We 'misguided save-a-life' enthusiasts wouldn't be so callous as to make a statement that 'a dead dog or cat does not contribute to the surplus'. That is just one of so many cruel, offensive remarks you so aptly throw around ... Heaven help us if you were in charge of the human race! ... All God's creatures have the right to life ... All life is precious."--Mrs. Jackie Geyer, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

### PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU WANT OUT!

"Take my name off list. Please discontinue Reports."--Mrs. Bertha Shoffmer, Birmingham, Alabama.

#### REPLY:

We suspect there are some others on our mailing list who feel the same way, but do not have the consideration to write and ask to be taken off the mailing list. Thank you for doing so. We can't afford to waste even two cents postage. So please let us know if you want out. We will not be offended.

### BETTER THAN A SALARY!

"The information in your Reports is always invaluable whenever I'm in a hassle on humane issues. I can depend on getting the clearest, most concise information from you. And I've been in a good many hassles!"--Mrs. Robert W. Kohloff, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

Miss Bernice Wallus, of Richmond, Virginia, writes: "Your Reports could not be improved!"

And from Gay Paree, France, (Mrs. Norton Tabackman): "Just a word to tell you how completely wonderful your latest Report, again!"

#### REPLY:

Ye editor receives no pay except your encouraging comments--better than a salary! Sorry we don't have room here for many other equally sincere and complimentary remarks received since our last Report. Your high approval is deeply appreciated by all of us at Humane Information Services.

### A CHALLENGE TO OUR READERS!

"In giving money to 'good causes' I always try to figure out some way to make those dollars even more. I will consider sending you \$500 if you can figure out some way to put it to work on a matched-fund basis. It wouldn't gain anything just to set aside the first \$500 of contributions after accepting my proposal, but it would be very worthwhile if that money could bring in \$500 you would not be likely to get otherwise, say from new donors, or for some special purpose. Do you have any ideas?"--Mrs. (name withheld by request of donor), Massachusetts.

#### REPLY:

Indeed we do! We think you have a great idea. Already, by letter, we have found a regular contributor who is willing to up her already generous annual contribution to match yours. And we have a specific new use for additional matching donations: the continued employment of a director of field services whom we have been able to obtain as a result of your generous contribution and the matching one. He is very much needed to conduct tests designed to evaluate alternative methods of euthanasia from an efficiency as well as humane standpoint, and for other purposes. He will then demonstrate the best methods to shelters and pounds. We wish you could see

his reports on some of the fiendish contraptions now being used to kill the dogs and cats in some shelters and pounds the South, recently visited. What he will do has never been done before by any humane society. It will prevent the suffering of thousands of dogs and cats. However, even your generous gift and the matching donation already obtained will continue to carry the very modest salary and expenses of the new worker. We need other matching donations from readers have never given before, and from members who have contributed but want to help additionally with this particular project. No humanitarians' gifts were ever used for a more worthwhile purpose and project. And thanks, dear friend, for your suggestion. We hope it works.

### WANTS TO IMPROVE EUTHANASIA

"As a volunteer in humane work for a number of years, I'm acquainted with most of the publications in this field. I seldom have I been so favorably impressed as I was by your Report to Humanitarians. The organization with which I am affiliated, Pet Assistance Foundation, is a no-nonsense group that gets things done without any of the frills--which might explain why your practical, down-to-earth approach has great appeal for me ... I would also appreciate extra copies of your previous Reports that deal with methods of euthanasia in so detail. We would find these most helpful as we are trying to determine once and for all if (the decompression chamber) is a humane way to destroy animals. As it is now used so universally, I think it's time conclusions are reached."--Mrs. Robert S. Laird, Newhall, California.

#### REPLY:

Thanks for your compliments. Interpretations of scientific evidence differ regarding the humaneness of the decompression chamber and other methods of euthanasia, and in many cases seem biased by considerations of cost and convenience. The weight of evidence indicates that decompression is not humane for young animals and for many adult animals with respiratory ailments. But these devices continue to be sold in substantial numbers to shelters and pounds. What is needed is an alternative method that requires no more time and expense and does not subject personnel to disagreeable personal contact with death. All methods, in relation to each other, will be described and evaluated in a forthcoming Report.

### TWO SERIOUS QUESTIONS FROM ENGLAND

"Is it too late to say I like the quality of paper and printing of your Report? Its contents are one of the few things that demand my immediate attention and boost my morale. Please answer two questions in a future Report: (1) Why are animals cruel? (2) Is it cruel to kill fleas? These are serious questions. We need a (new) definition of cruelty. Best wishes."--Miss Valerie Pratt, London, England.

#### REPLY:

We take you seriously. In fact, your query is extremely pertinent to the question of what position humanitarians can intelligently take on many problems relating to wildlife and ecology. We will try to answer you in a later Report.

### INTERNATIONAL USE OF REPORT TO HUMANITARIANS

"Your Report to Humanitarians fills a genuine need in the U. S. as well as being equally valid internationally, should your Report reach other countries."--Mrs. Warren Rossney, San Diego, California.

#### REPLY:

Our Reports go to just over 500 humane societies and humane leaders in foreign countries. Our articles frequently are produced in whole or in part in the publications of foreign societies. Because of international exchange difficulties, it is inconvenient for some of those residing in other countries (except Canada) to send small contributions, so our U. S. members must help to pay for the extra postage and envelopes required for foreign mailings, but it is worth the cost.

### DIVIDED EFFORTS--AND CONTRIBUTIONS

"The divided and fragmented members of humane societies could do much more if united. I could in that case make one central contribution and feel it would be more effective."--Mrs. Warren Rossney, San Diego, California.

#### REPLY:

Are you surprised to receive two replies to your letter (see above)? We agree about the desirability of fewer societies, or having just one--provided the single organization does not become complacent, hidebound and devoted to maintaining the positions and salaries of employees rather than really helping the animals (please see our Report No. 14, December, 1970). Real competition is healthy. But you can help to achieve more unified action by concentrating your support on only one or a very few societies. If you do, we hope you will decide on us!

### THE FLEAS ARE HEARD FROM AGAIN

We had thought that our reply, in Report No. 23, to additional letters about fleas would be our final word on the